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Director

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FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

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Agroterrorism

Threats to America's Economy and Food Supply

By DEAN OLSON, M.A.

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The United States enjoys a safe, plentiful, and inexpensive food supply. Americans spend only 11 percent of their income on food compared with the global average of 20 to 30 percent.¹ The nation's agricultural abundance helps drive its economic prosperity. As many as 1 of 6 jobs are linked to agriculture, a trillion-dollar industry. Agriculture-related products comprise

nearly 10 percent of all U.S. exports, amounting to nearly \$68 billion in 2006.²

Terrorists consider America's agriculture and food production tempting targets. They have noticed that its food supply is among the most vulnerable and least protected of all potential targets of attack. When American and allied forces overran al Qaeda sanctuaries in the caves of eastern Afghanistan

in 2002, among the thousands of documents they discovered were U.S. agricultural documents and al Qaeda training manuals targeting agriculture.

A subset of bioterrorism, *agroterrorism* is defined as "the deliberate introduction of an animal or plant disease for the purpose of generating fear, causing economic losses, or undermining social stability."³ It represents a tactic to attack

the economic stability of the United States. Killing livestock and plants or contaminating food can help terrorists cause economic crises in the agriculture and food industries. Secondary goals include social unrest and loss of confidence in government.

Serious Concern

Agroterrorism is not new. The Assyrians poisoned enemy wells with rye ergot during the 6th century B.C. During World War I, German agents in the United States infected horses and cattle in transit across the Atlantic to France. In 1994, in The Dalles, Oregon, a religious cult intentionally contaminated 10 restaurant salad bars with salmonella, sickening more than 750 people in an attempt to influence the

outcome of a local election. Since 1912, 12 documented cases have involved the substate use of pathogenic agents to infect livestock or contaminate food.⁴

The agroterrorism threat emanates from four categories of perpetrators. The foremost threat is posed by transnational groups, like al Qaeda—widely believed to present the most probable threat of inflicting economic harm on the United States.

The second group is comprised of economic opportunists tempted to manipulate markets. They understand that a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak, for example, would have a dramatic impact on markets. By introducing the virus, they could exploit the markets for personal economic gain.

The third category includes domestic terrorists who may view the introduction of FMD as a blow against the federal government. As an outlier of this category, the unbalanced individual or disgruntled employee may perpetrate an attack for a variety of idiosyncratic or narcissistic motivations.

Finally, militant animal rights or environmental activists pose a threat because they consider immoral the use of animals for food. Groups, such as the Animal Liberation Front and its sister organization, the Earth Liberation Front, could view an attack on the animal food industry a positive event.⁵

Threat Environment

Because it lacks the drama and spectacle of more common terrorist violence, such as bombings and murders, agroterrorism has remained a secondary consideration, and no documented attacks in the homeland have occurred since 9/11. Several recent factors may have made agroterrorism a more attractive tactic.

First, the threat environment has changed dramatically. America has had recent successes against al Qaeda's leadership. These victories have forced the group to morph in both structure and tactics. The increasingly



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Terrorist leaders realize that America's strength stems largely from its economic vitality.

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dangerous environment it now must operate in has prevented it from mounting catastrophic terrorist attacks on the scale of 9/11. Now, al Qaeda places its emphasis on smaller, independent attacks following a “death by a thousand cuts” strategy to exhaust, overwhelm, and distract U.S. Department of Homeland Security forces. The group seeks to flood America’s already information overloaded intelligence systems with myriad threats and “background noise.”⁶ Agroterrorism also may serve as a way to magnify the social upheaval caused by smaller, independent attacks, like bombings.

Second, Usama Bin Ladin consistently had argued that attacking the U.S. economy represented the best way to destroy America’s ability to project military power abroad. Underpinning this view is al Qaeda’s historical narrative that jihad against the Soviets following the invasion of Afghanistan led not only to the defeat of the Red Army but, ultimately, to the demise of the U.S.S.R.⁷ As divorced from reality as this view seems, economic harm remains one of the pillars of al Qaeda’s terror strategy against the United States. In a video broadcast before the 2004 U.S. presidential elections, Usama Bin Ladin bragged that his organization “...bled Russia for 10 years

until it went bankrupt and was forced to withdraw in defeat.... We are continuing in the same policy to make America bleed profusely to the point of bankruptcy....” He boasted that the 9/11 attacks had cost al Qaeda \$500,000 while inflicting a staggering \$500 billion in economic losses to America.⁸ According to Bin Ladin, “every dollar of al Qaeda defeated a million dollars [of America]...besides the loss of a huge number of jobs.”

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The same factors that yield inexpensive and plentiful food by promoting maximum production efficiency also make American agricultural systems inherently vulnerable.

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Analysts believe that al Qaeda’s evolving tactics increasingly will “focus on targets that will yield the most economic damage.”⁹ Terrorist leaders realize that America’s strength stems largely from its economic vitality. They pursue an overarching strategy that all attacks should focus on weakening America’s economic strength,

especially through protracted guerilla warfare. In their view, as the United States loses its standing in the Middle East, groups, like al Qaeda, can gain ground and remove from power regimes they view as corrupt and illegitimate.¹⁰

Terrorists know that a successful agroterrorism incident threatens America’s economic welfare and its standing as a leading exporter of agricultural products to the world. A significant disruption in agricultural exports caused by such an attack would have ripple effects in the United States’ and global economies. This economic disruption would occur on three levels.

The first involves direct losses due to containment measures, such as stop-movement orders (SMOs) or quarantines of suspected stock. Additional costs would arise from the culling and destruction of diseaseridden livestock.¹¹ Second, indirect multiplier effects, such as compensation to farmers for destruction of agricultural commodities and losses suffered by directly and indirectly related industries, would arise.¹² And, third, international costs would result from protective trade embargoes. Less measurable consequences would include the undermining of confidence in and support of government, creation of social panic, and threat

to public health on the national and global levels.

Given its ease of execution and low cost to high benefit ratio, agroterrorism fits the evolving strategy of al Qaeda that focuses on inexpensive but highly disruptive attacks in lieu of monumental ones. Agroterrorism could exacerbate the social upheaval caused by random bombings. The ability to employ cheap and unsophisticated means to undermine America's economic base, combined with the added payoff to potentially overwhelm its counterterrorism resources, makes livestock- and food-related attacks increasingly attractive.¹³

Foot and Mouth Disease

Attacks directed against the cattle, swine, or poultry industries or via the food chain pose the most serious danger for latent, ongoing effects and general socioeconomic and political disruption. Experts agree that FMD presents the most ominous threat.¹⁴ Eradicated in the United States in 1929, FMD remains endemic in South America, Africa, and Asia.¹⁵ An especially contagious virus 20 times more infectious than smallpox, FMD causes painful blisters on the tongues, hooves, and teats of cloven-hoofed animals, including cattle, hogs, sheep, goats, and deer, rendering them unable to walk, give

milk, eat, or drink. Although people generally cannot contract the disease, they can carry the virus in their lungs for up to 48 hours and transmit it to animals. The animal-to-animal airborne transmission range is 50 miles.¹⁶ An infected animal can shed the virus in large quantities from its upper respiratory tract via drooling, coughing, and discharging mucus. Extremely stable, FMD can survive in straw or clothing for 1 month

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and spread up to 100 kilometers via the wind. Because herds exist as highly crowded populations bred and reared in extremely close proximity to one another, a significant risk exists that such pathogenic agents as FMD will spread well beyond the locus of a specific outbreak before health officials become aware of a problem. An FMD outbreak could spread to

as many as 25 states in as little as 5 days simply through the regulated movement of animals from farm to market.¹⁷

From a tactical perspective, an FMD attack holds appeal for several reasons. First, unlike biological warfare directed against humans, no issue of weaponization exists. In an FMD attack, the animals themselves serve as the primary medium for pathogenic transmission, and countries as close as those in South America offer a ready source of the virus. As one analyst described it, the virus “can be spread by simply wiping the mucus from an infected animal on a handkerchief and then transferring the virus to healthy animals by wiping their noses...by stopping on a highway in rural America and releasing the virus among curious livestock an outbreak could be initiated.”¹⁸

Second, FMD is nonzoonotic, presenting no risk of accidental human infection. There exists no need for elaborate personal protective equipment or an advanced understanding of animal disease science. In a biowarfare attack targeting people, the deadly pathogen poses a threat to the perpetrators, as well as their intended victims. Preparing the pathogen so that terrorists can handle it safely yet disseminate it effectively to intended victims can

prove difficult. For instance, the Aum Shinrikyo sarin gas attacks on the Tokyo subway in 1994 largely failed to kill the number of people intended due to the crude method of dissemination.

Third, terrorists could introduce and subsequently disperse the virus throughout the American food production system through multiple carriers, including animals carrying and introducing it into susceptible herds; animals exposed to contraband materials, such as contaminated food, hay, feedstuffs, hides, or biologics; people wearing clothing or using equipment, including tractors and trucks, to transmit the virus to uninfected animals; and contaminated facilities, such as feed yards, sale barns, and trucks that commonly hold or transport susceptible animals.¹⁹

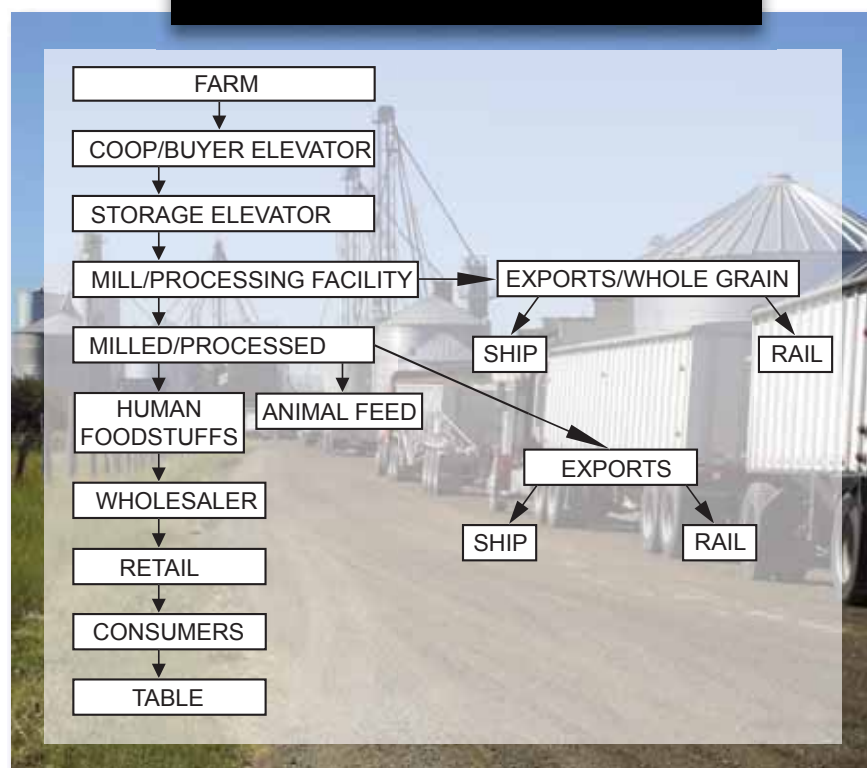
The same factors that yield inexpensive and plentiful food by promoting maximum production efficiency also make American agricultural systems inherently vulnerable. The highly concentrated and intensive nature of livestock production encourages the rapid spread of contagious pathogens.²⁰ Most dairies house at least 1,500 cows, with the largest facilities containing 10,000. Animals often are born on breeding farms and then transported to another state for slaughtering and processing. Otherwise isolated and widely dispersed farms often

share equipment, vehicles, and veterinary instruments. Feedlots and auctions routinely intermingle animals from a wide geographic area. On average, a pound of meat travels 1,000 miles before it reaches the consumer's table.²¹

The introduction of FMD would require the mass slaughter and disposal of infected animals. An outbreak could halt the domestic and international sale of meat and meat products for years. In this regard, in 2001, FMD in the United Kingdom affected 9,000 farms and required the destruction of more than 4,000,000 animals.

Researchers believe that a similar outbreak in the United States would cost taxpayers up to \$60 billion.²² An FMD attack could result in massive herd culling, the need to destroy processed goods, and extensive decontamination efforts of production and livestock-containment facilities. Most Americans have not witnessed the intense media coverage of high-volume culling operations involving the destruction and disposal of tens of thousands of animals. Large-scale eradication and disposal of livestock likely would be especially controversial as it affects farmers and ranchers

The Food Process Chart: Seed to Plate



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and offends the sensibilities of animal rights activists and environmental organizations.

Food Production and Distribution

If terrorists strive for human deaths, the food production and distribution chain offers a low-tech but effective mechanism for disseminating toxins and bacteria, such as botulism, E. coli, and salmonella. Developments in the farm-to-table continuum greatly have increased the number of entry points for these agents. Many food processing and packing plants employ large, unscreened seasonal workforces. They commonly operate uneven standards of internal quality and inadequate biosurveillance control to detect adulteration.²³ These vulnerabilities, combined with the lack of security at many processing and packing plants, contribute to the ease of perpetrating a food-borne attack.

Beyond the economic and political impact, low-tech bioterrorist assaults against the food chain have the potential to create social panic as people lose confidence in the safety of the food supply. A large-scale attack potentially could undermine the public's confidence in its government. Because most processed food travels to distribution centers within a matter of hours, a single case of chemical or biological adulteration

could have significant latent ongoing effects, particularly if the source of the contamination is not immediately apparent and there are acute ailments or deaths.²⁴ Supermarkets in major American cities stock only a 7-day supply of food; therefore, any significant and continuing disruption in supply quickly will lead to severe shortages.

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Experts believe that fruit- and vegetable-packing plants are among the most vulnerable venues for food-borne attacks. Many represent small-scale manufacturers that specialize in ready-to-eat meats or aggregated foodstuffs. They do not practice uniform biosecurity methods, and they do not use heat, an effective front-end barrier against pathogens, in food processing. Also, because

they deal in already-prepared produce that does not require cooking—a good back-end defense against microbial introduction—they provide a viable portal to introduce pathogens.

Law Enforcement Preparedness

Farms, ranches, and feedlots in America are dispersed, open, and generally unprotected. The majority of state and local law enforcement agencies face financial and strategic challenges when responding to agroterrorism, yet the laws of many states treat agroterrorism as a crime investigation, giving local law enforcement agencies primary responsibility.

An outbreak of FMD would exhaust law enforcement resources quickly. After recognition of the disease by state agriculture authorities, subsequent steps in the emergency response involve containment and eradication, often involving multiple herds and a large quarantine area that may encompass multiple counties. State agriculture authorities working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have responsibility and authority for animal disease.²⁵ Specially trained animal health officials make decisions on disease control, such as livestock quarantine and the timing and method of livestock

depopulation—culling, destroying, and disposing of diseased animals from infected herds by burning or burial.

Following strict biosecurity measures can prevent the spread of disease. Local and state law enforcement would play a pivotal role in this effort by adhering to three primary responsibilities.

First, police officials would enforce quarantine orders given by state agriculture authorities. This involves isolating and containing infected stock to prevent the spread of disease. A quarantine area would comprise a 6-mile radius, approximately 113 square miles, surrounding the point of origin; numerous roadblocks would prevent vehicles, equipment, or persons from entering or leaving without detailed decontamination measures and authorization.²⁶ Inside the quarantine area, officials would establish an “exposed zone” in which all cloven-hoofed animals would be destroyed. For effectiveness, quarantine of infected premises and SMOs would have to remain in effect for a minimum of 30 days.²⁷

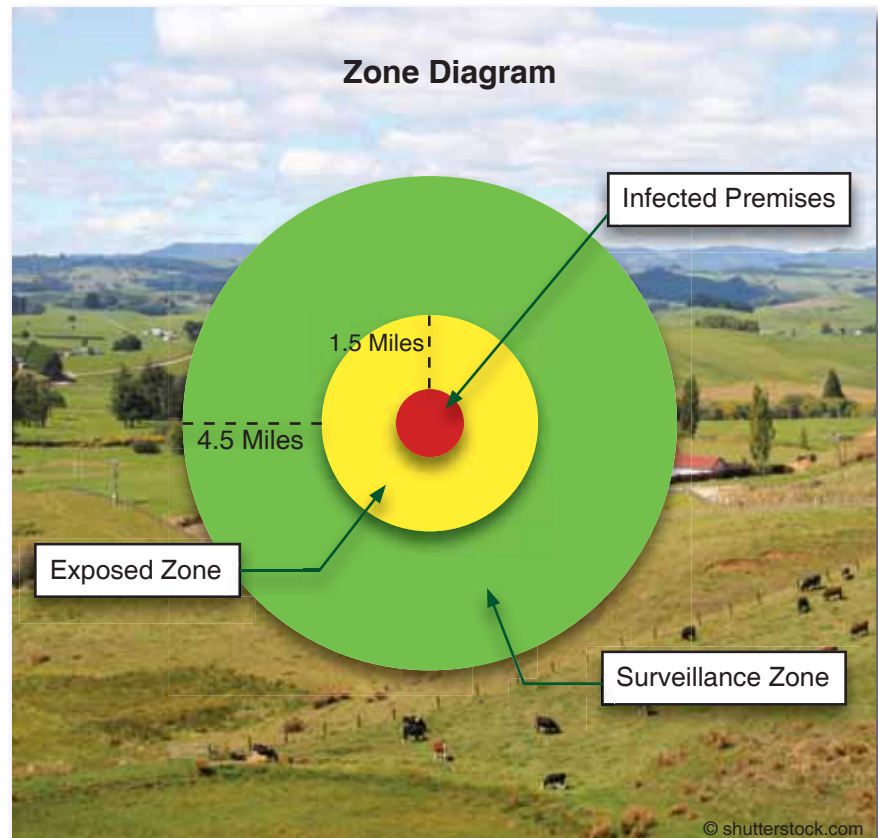
The second responsibility occurs in conjunction with quarantine. Officers would enforce SMOs issued by the state governor to prevent the spread of the disease.²⁸ Initial biosecurity efforts could require placement of all animals under

an SMO. Law enforcement may be empowered to restrict human and animal movement in and out of the quarantine zone. This authority would include all animals in transit within a wide geographic area until the investigation clarified the extent of the infection and determined which animals can move safely. Although FMD affects only cloven-hoofed animals, humans, horses, and other animals may carry the virus.

Enforcing an SMO would require care and shelter for animals in transit that must be temporarily unloaded and housed at local sites providing feed and water.²⁹ During the

SMO, law enforcement would interview drivers to determine points of origin and destinations of animals. Research indicates that officers would stop and evaluate an average of nearly 50 vehicles per hour in the first day of an SMO.

Third, the criminal investigation of the outbreak further would tax already strained law enforcement resources. The investigation would focus on identifying the source of the virus and the mechanism used to infect susceptible animals. The danger of additional infections by the perpetrators would make the criminal investigation time sensitive.



Many law enforcement agencies lack the sufficient resources and procedures to simultaneously cope with quarantines, SMOs, and criminal investigations while also staffing widely dispersed checkpoints around the clock for the duration of the emergency. When combined with the need also to deliver routine law enforcement services, most agencies would struggle to meet these demands, especially during the protracted nature of an FMD outbreak.

Conclusion

Agriculture may not represent terrorists' first choice of targets because it lacks the shock factor of more traditional attacks; however, it comprises the largest single sector in the U.S. economy, making agroterrorism a viable primary aspiration. Such terrorist groups as al Qaeda have made economic and trade disruption key goals. They believe that by imposing economic hardship on America, its citizens will tire of the struggle and force their elected leaders to withdraw from commitments abroad.

Every level of the food chain, including farms, feedlots, chemical storage facilities, meatpacking plants, and distribution operations, remains vulnerable to agroterrorism. Because terrorists rely on a lack of preparedness, law

enforcement agencies should develop a plan to prevent agroterrorism and minimize the results of an attack. Officers must investigate from an agroterrorism perspective thefts of livestock; a criminal organization may steal animals with the intent of infecting them and placing them back into the population. Thefts of vaccines, medicines, and livestock-related equipment should be of concern

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An outbreak of FMD would exhaust law enforcement resources quickly.

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and carefully investigated. It also is vital that law enforcement officials forward reports of such incidents to their states' intelligence-fusion centers, threat-integration centers, or law enforcement intelligence units or networks. ♦

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Crimes Against Children Spotlight

The Neighborhood Canvass and Child Abduction Investigations

By Ashli-Jade Douglas

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In 76 percent of child abduction murders, the victim was killed within 3 hours of the reported abduction, and in 89 percent of child abduction murders, the victim was killed within 24 hours.¹ These dramatic statistics illustrate the importance of executing the most effective recovery strategies immediately after a child goes missing. A neighborhood canvass is one such tactic. According to FBI studies, the majority of successfully resolved child abduction cases included a neighborhood canvass.² Past FBI cases demonstrate the importance of conducting a neighborhood canvass and showcase why this investigative tool frequently helps resolve child abduction incidents.³

At times, law enforcement personnel overlook or underemphasize the importance of this practice. Yet, according to the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit's (BAU) Child Abduction Response Plan (CARP), the neighborhood canvass is, perhaps, the

most vital step in missing children cases.⁴ Based on the number of reported child abductions in which a neighborhood canvass facilitated the recovery of the victim, the FBI confidently asserts the imperativeness of neighborhood canvasses during all child abduction investigations.⁵

A Useful Tool

A neighborhood canvass may cover the area around the victim's residence or last known location—the most recent place the victim was sighted after the initial abduction. An effective neighborhood canvass provides intelligence about the physical location and its residents. Thorough searches of the victim's neighborhood and last known location, in conjunction with interviews, help investigators develop potential suspects and establish a timeline for the missing child. According to BAU's CARP, in many cases, the offender

resided, worked, frequently visited, or otherwise spent time in the immediate area of the abduction. If executed meticulously and in a timely manner, a neighborhood canvass can provide crucial intelligence about potential suspects.

A thorough neighborhood canvass allows investigators to search for the missing child while identifying and interviewing all individuals near the victim's abduction site or last known location during the critical period that follows a child's disappearance. In the hours immediately following an abduction, investigators must begin the canvass promptly as there typically is a 2-hour delay in missing children being reported to authorities.⁶ During this process, officers should interview every resident and visitor from the neighborhood in question.⁷

Additionally, any missing child case poses myriad possibilities for the cause of the victim's disappearance aside from abduction. The victim could be a runaway, lost child, "throw away" child, or victim of accidental death. Even further, the abduction could have been completely fabricated to cover up a family member's crime against the victim or other such domestic issues.⁸ Assessing the aforementioned items will eliminate some possibilities of how the child disappeared, reveal the options that remain, and help investigators decide which leads they need to pursue.⁹

BAU reports that when investigators receive a missing child complaint, determining the child's whereabouts presents the most challenging task. Crucial locations to search include any nearby isolated area where an abductor would feel safe and secluded enough to take the child. This includes

drug houses, vacant properties, trails and parks, closed construction sites, empty parking lots and garages, abandoned businesses and factories, trailers, and storage lockers.¹⁰

Perhaps even more critical, a neighborhood canvass can reveal if a reported abduction never occurred at all. For example, if parents or guardians injured or killed a child during a domestic dispute, they may report that the child went missing to cover for their crime—this also is known as a false allegation. In these instances, interviews with neighbors may provide critical information, such as suspected child abuse or an unstable family situation, which could lead investigators to discover that the child was not abducted at all. If an abduction never occurred, the sooner investigators reach this conclusion, the less time and resources they waste on a fruitless search.

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A neighborhood canvass may cover the area around the victim's residence or last known location—the most recent place the victim was sighted after the initial abduction.

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FBI Child Abduction Cases

FBI reporting analyzed the investigative tools used in 61 child abduction cases in fiscal year 2010 and indicated that 50 percent of these cases were solved or at least significantly assisted by the immediate execution of a neighborhood canvass.¹¹ Additionally, the FBI outlines different levels of thoroughness to describe neighborhood canvasses. Level 1, the most detailed canvass, is likeliest to provide investigators with vital information to assist them in their investigation.¹² A Level 1 canvass requires interviews with all residents in the vicinity of the last known location, along with an effort to obtain lawful consent from the residents of the homes, to search the front and back yards of nearby houses, as well as abandoned buildings and other

publicly accessible areas. Investigators also can request that residents allow a search of the interior of their homes. When legal requirements permit and a true abduction is suspected, investigators may search a location without the residents present. Ideally, every neighborhood canvass should be held to the Level 1 standards of thoroughness to ensure a complete investigation. FBI child abduction case examples demonstrate the effectiveness of employing a neighborhood canvass.

- Family members reported that their child went missing while camping. Investigators canvassed the campsite and obtained crucial intelligence about the family's activities during the trip, which later became useful for solving the investigation.
- When interviewing residents at an apartment complex where a child was reported missing, investigators discovered witnesses who saw the abductor's license plate and could provide accurate descriptions of the vehicle. Also, FBI agents determined that one of the other residents in the complex had a drug connection with the abductor, which explained his motivation for entering the building.
- Interviews with neighbors allowed investigators to identify a woman whose daughter saw the missing child at the last known location. From this witness' information, investigators honed in on one location, where they found a drug house. Later, they discovered that laborers were working inside the house at the time the child went missing, which helped them

“A prompt, thorough, and well-executed neighborhood canvass can make all the difference in an abduction case and, thus, between life and death for a child”

develop a list of suspects. The witness' sighting confirmed that one suspect lived close to the victim's last known location; eventually, this individual was convicted as the offender.

- A neighborhood canvass helped correct an inaccurate timeline. The initial investigative team created a timeline based on information provided by other officers, rather than from interviews with residents of the neighborhood or surrounding areas of the last known location. However, once the FBI's Child Abduction Rapid Deployment (CARD) team conducted a neighborhood canvass, it developed an accurate timeline that assisted investigators in determining the suspects' whereabouts.¹³

- During a case in which investigators suspected the reported abduction never occurred, a neighborhood canvass revealed that no neighbors saw the missing

child for a week prior to the alleged abduction. This information led investigators to a greater understanding of the victim's abnormal family dynamics, the behavior of the parents, and the child and offenders' last known location.¹⁴

Conclusion

The neighborhood canvass has proved one of the most critical and effective investigative tools for child abduction investigations. The intelligence gleaned from these interviews and searches helps investigators accurately develop a timeline, identify suspects, gather new evidence, and realize when allegations of abduction are false.¹⁵ A prompt,

thorough, and well-executed neighborhood canvass can make all the difference in an abduction case and, thus, between life and death for a child. ♦

Endnotes

¹ Robert McKenna, Katherine Brown, Robert Keppel, Joseph Weis, and Marvin Skeen, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Investigative Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation* (Seattle, WA, 2006).

² FBI Crimes Against Children Unit.

³ For the purpose of this article, the author defines abduction as “the initial report of a child being taken without the knowledge of a parent or guardian.”

⁴ FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit 3, Child Abduction Response Plan (2008).

⁵ High confidence generally indicates that FBI judgments are based on high-quality information from multiple sources or a singly highly reliable source or that the nature of the issue makes it possible to render a solid judgment.

⁶ McKenna, Brown, Keppel, Weis, and Skeen, *Investigative Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit 3, Child Abduction Response Plan (2008).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Michael Conrad, “Behavioral CARD Team Training Power Point” (presented April 20, 2011).

¹¹ Based on research by the author of child abduction nonransom cases the FBI opened from October 1, 2009, to September 30, 2010.

¹² Christopher Young, “Investigation and Interviewing: Techniques for Search and Rescue Responders”; <http://www.1srg.org/Contributed-Materials/Investigation-Interviewing.pdf> (accessed February 10 2011).

¹³ Robert King, e-mail correspondence to author, February 14, 2011.

¹⁴ For further information about the FBI’s CARD team, visit its Web site at http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthfts/cac/card. For further information about the FBI’s Crimes Against Children Unit, visit its Web site at http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/vc_majorthfts/cac.

¹⁵ Alasdair Mackenzie, e-mail correspondence to author, February 16, 2011.

Ms. Douglas serves as an intelligence analyst in the FBI’s Criminal Investigative Division.

Wanted: Photographs



The *Bulletin* staff always is looking for dynamic, law enforcement-related images for possible publication in the magazine. We are interested in those that visually depict the many aspects of the law enforcement profession and illustrate the various tasks law enforcement personnel perform.

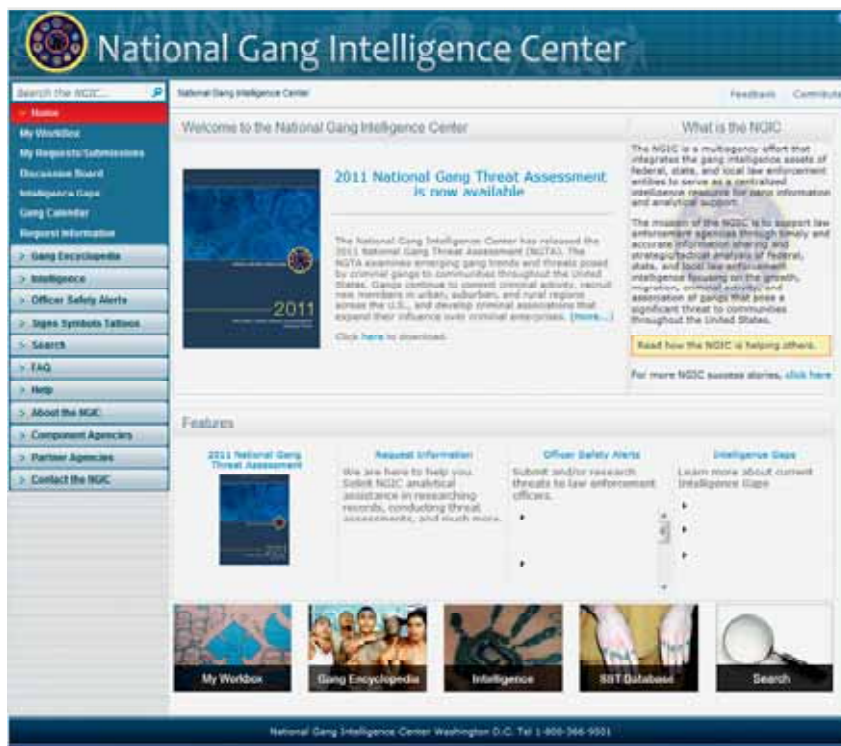
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Technology Update

National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) Unveils Online Tool to Share Intelligence and Assist Law Enforcement



tasked with collecting, analyzing, and producing gang intelligence products to support federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies. On a daily basis, it assists with regional and national threat assessments; geo-spatial analysis and mapping projects; identification of gang signs, symbols, and tattoos; analytical support for specific gang-related investigations; strategic and tactical intelligence reports; and training.

Striving to fulfill that mission in a fast-paced information age, NGIC has unveiled NGIC Online, an information system

The burden on gang investigators and analysts to comprehend the full nature of the threat posed by gangs to their communities has expanded and become increasingly complex. Gangs are more adaptable and sophisticated, employ new and advanced technology to facilitate criminal activity to avoid law enforcement scrutiny, enhance their criminal operations, and connect with other gang members, criminal organizations, and potential recruits nationwide and even worldwide.

The National Gang Intelligence Center (NGIC) is the only Department of Justice entity

with Web-based tools designed for researching gang-related intelligence. NGIC Online serves as an Internet extension of the center, located near the Nation's Capital, which houses intelligence analysts from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Federal Bureau of Prisons; Drug Enforcement Agency; Department of Homeland Security; Department of Defense; Federal Bureau of Investigation; and the U.S. Marshals Service. This system is accessible through Law Enforcement Online (LEO), a free resource available to law enforcement throughout the country.



After authenticating their law enforcement credentials through the LEO Web site, users can connect directly to NGIC Online and gain access to a variety of resources. The system allows law enforcement members to search the system's vast library of intelligence products and images, post announcements, access officer safety reports, request information, and view the status of requests and submissions to NGIC. The Requests for Information (RFI) portal provides users with the capability to solicit NGIC analytical assistance and communicate with the center's network of national subject matter experts. NGIC Online also contains a gang training and events calendar, as well as a discussion board. In the near future, a fully searchable gang-terms dictionary will

be offered as an additional resource. Users are encouraged to share their comments, suggestions, and any new intelligence through the site, which allows NGIC to continue to have the most up-to-date and accurate gang information available.

Law enforcement professionals face unprecedented challenges as they develop strategies to combat the ever-increasing influence and negative impact of gangs across the country and around the world. Through NGIC Online, the center provides law enforcement officers with direct access to the information they need to make informed decisions and stay safe. ♦

For more information, please contact NGIC at ngic@leo.gov or at 1-800-366-9501.

Focus on Training



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Interpersonal Skills Training in Police Academy Curriculum

By Peter J. McDermott and Diana Hulse, Ed.D.

Effective policing occurs when officers and members of the public partner to create safe and crime-free communities. This partnership requires that officers display not only strong technical capabilities but interpersonal skills. Therefore, law enforcement agencies must train their officers on how to interact effectively with the public.

Together, technical and interpersonal skills form the basis of all police work. Any well-established law enforcement agency trains and evaluates all recruits for their technical (e.g., tactical and legal) abilities. For example, in firearms training, recruits must earn a certain score to carry a weapon.

Unfortunately, many agencies do not concentrate on training and evaluating officers' interpersonal skills (e.g., active listening, problem solving, persuasion, and conflict management)

even though officers need them to competently execute tactical and legal tasks. If officers cannot communicate with the public, poor community relations will hinder even the most technically proficient departments.

To illustrate this point, in 1983, George Miller wrote about the tension that exists when the community and the police interact. He claimed these difficulties exist because of the different expectations and attitudes that each group brings to the encounter. This conundrum continues 27 years later as officers try to navigate their responsibilities amid police-community tension and increased expectations of privacy.¹

An officer stops a motor vehicle for a minor violation. Conflict arises immediately between the male officer and the female operator of the vehicle. The female driver refuses to provide necessary paperwork and tells the officer that he makes her

uneasy. The officer calls for backup. The backup officer, also male, arrives and speaks with the woman, who expresses her trepidation of the first officer.

Response #1: The backup officer mandates that the driver follow the instructions. The woman refuses to cooperate and again cites her fear of the first officer. The men determine that the situation demands a higher level of force. They ask her to step out of the car and then place her under arrest.

Response #2: The backup officer says, “I understand your concerns, but my colleague and I need this information. How do you feel about handing me the documents, and I will pass them to him? I want to make sure that you understand what I said, so can you repeat back to me what you heard?” The driver replies that she understands the backup officer’s request and provides him the documentation to pass to the first officer.

In this second response, the backup officer displays active listening skills, conveys his understanding of the driver’s perspective, reflects her feelings, clarifies his message, and resolves the conflict by offering an alternative solution.

Department officials might never hear about the incident in the second response unless the driver contacts the department to compliment the backup officer. They may, however, hear about the situation in the first response if the department garners negative attention as a result. This fictitious scenario demonstrates the importance of interpersonal skills training to increase the likelihood that officers choose the second response and, thus, achieve a positive outcome.

COMMUNICATION IN COMMON POLICE PRACTICES

Talking and Touching

Fundamentally, police officers do two things: they talk to people and they touch people. Most police activities involve one of these actions. The “touch factor” in police training, driven by concern for officer safety, encompasses instruction in firearms, motor vehicle stops, self defense, arrest and control, and responses to crimes in progress. Instructors easily can witness and evaluate officers’ proficiency in these areas. For example, in firearms training, recruits must receive a certain score to qualify to carry a weapon.

The “talk factor” in police training focuses on verbal interactions during criminal investigations, traffic stops, interviews, and interrogations. Unlike technical skills, however, police instructors cannot easily witness and evaluate officer performance in these competencies. Yet, officers need these skills to ably execute tactical and legal tasks. The Connecticut Police Officers Standards and Training Council (POSTC) and the Kansas Law Enforcement

Training Center (KLETC) both support this view and maintain that effective interpersonal skills are essential to virtually every aspect of police operations.

Law enforcement officers cannot avoid interactions with the public because they occur so frequently in three very common areas of police work: motor vehicle stops, criminal investigations, and domestic violence and conflicts. Officers’ interactions with the community as part of these duties illustrate the need for interpersonal skills training in law enforcement academies.

“
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”

Motor vehicle stops are considered one of the best ways to prevent crime, and they present the primary opportunity for communication between officers and the public; unfortunately, traffic stops also serve as the most frequent source of complaints against the police when they lead to conflict between the stopped individuals and officers. While law enforcement cannot avoid all hostility from motorists, the outcome of such conflicts depends on how officers approach the situation. Even when the incident requires enforcement action, officers should make every possible effort to seek a satisfactory outcome for everyone involved. Officers cannot predict the exact behaviors they will encounter during motor vehicle stops, and, thus, they need strong interpersonal skills to minimize hostility and misunderstandings in these situations.



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In criminal investigations, the community calls upon police officers to assist individuals who have suffered the most negative experiences imaginable, and the outcomes of these investigations dramatically impact those involved. During these cases, the investigating officers' interpersonal skills significantly influence the community's impression of the police. Public perception, in turn, affects the success of investigations by impacting community members' willingness to provide information.

Often, domestic conflict involves physical violence coupled with strong emotions. Officers who respond to these situations must secure the scene and gather information to determine probable cause. A strong foundation of verbal and nonverbal skills allows officers to accomplish these tasks in a sensitive environment.

Essential Techniques

To improve officers' performance in common police practices, agencies can instruct personnel

on basic competencies that ease communication between the police and the public during motor vehicle stops, criminal investigations, and domestic conflicts. These skills fall into three categories: setting the stage, gathering evidence, and confirming information.

To set the stage for effective communication, officers should practice crucial *verbal* and *non-verbal conversation habits*. These include eye contact, body position, voice tone, facial expressions, gestures, physical distance, and physical contact. Police also should use open invitations to talk, such as encouragers and closed and open-ended questions.

When gathering evidence, four communication skills assist officers in collecting pertinent information: *focusing*, *paraphrasing*, *reflecting*, and *confronting*. Focusing helps with reframing and reconstructing problems. When paraphrasing, officers restate someone's thoughts in different words and in a nonjudgmental manner. Reflecting involves feelings as officers articulate an individual's emotions, whether stated or implied. Finally, confronting aids police in identifying discrepancies in a story.

To confirm information, officers should use two strategies to pull together relevant data and ensure that they accurately capture an individual's story. *Clarifying* confirms that the officer and the individual agree on the exchanged information, and *summarizing* establishes that all information gathered is accurate.

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS TRAINING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Some law enforcement training programs, such as POSTC and KLETC, already provide communications-based instruction for recruits. However, current descriptions of many training

programs fail to explain how learning objectives link to lesson plans. Instructors might simply describe these skills in class, telling their students “You use interpersonal skills when you walk up to motorists with a friendly demeanor and engage them in conversation.” Or, maybe teachers describe skills, model them, and evaluate recruits. Perhaps, students only observe the instructor, or, maybe, they practice, demonstrate, and master these skills. Currently, a lack of clarity surrounds how academies determine that police recruits truly master the competencies in a communications training curriculum.

Counselor Education Training Programs

As police academies determine how to teach and evaluate interpersonal skills, they should consider using methods from counselor education curricula. Counseling-education students complete at least one course on essential interpersonal skills and then apply these techniques to all other areas of their training. Similarly, in police academies, interpersonal skills should be taught and mastered independently so that recruits can use these abilities to supplement technical training. Six steps comprise a common procedure in counselor education courses; this process exemplifies how law enforcement academies can teach their own recruits.

- 1) The instructor presents, defines, and demonstrates a specific capability to the class.
- 2) The students practice the skill, often in groups of three. One student takes on the role of the counselor, another plays the client, and the third observes. Group members take a turn in each role.

- 3) Class members discuss their challenges with each task, and they continue to practice.
- 4) Each student performs in front of the class and instructor, who evaluates each class member on all of the assigned skills.
- 5) The class repeats steps 1 through 4 until all techniques are introduced, modeled, practiced, demonstrated, and evaluated.
- 6) At the end of the semester, students demonstrate all of the competencies that they

learned in the course during a 10- to 15-minute mock counseling session. The instructor videotapes each session and evaluates the students’ command of all the skills.

Many counselor education course materials outline step-by-step processes for learning interpersonal skills, which police academies can adapt for law enforcement.² Recruits can practice their techniques by modeling common interactions between the police and the public.

Additionally, instructors should consider using counseling interns or other trained nonpolice personnel to facilitate recruits’ learning.

This initial training builds an essential foundation for new officers because they need to master communication skills before they execute tactical and legal tasks. In this context, law enforcement training resembles learning to play an instrument, like the piano. Beginners must learn certain basic and requisite piano techniques, regardless of their chosen genre, before they can progress. In law enforcement, all new officers must master verbal and nonverbal interpersonal skills regardless of their job function, title, or location.

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Lessons from the Medical Profession

Though law enforcement and medicine seem unrelated, both professions demand interpersonal skills for many of the same reasons because they blend technical tasks with frequent human interaction. Like doctors, police officers must listen to and understand the public—their “patients.” When officers communicate effectively, it strengthens their ability to gather pertinent information, supplements their technical knowledge, and breaks down barriers between the police and the public. These items mirror how interpersonal skills function in medicine because doctors must bridge the gap between professionals and patients to practice medicine competently.³

Both doctors and police rely on information from human sources to facilitate their investigations. “If the doctor does not facilitate the story telling—if the patient is not encouraged to go on—the patient very often will not.”⁴ The same logic applies to interview subjects: Witnesses provide however much or little information is drawn from them, depending on how the officers conduct the interview. Just as spoken and unspoken language influences patients’ willingness to comply with their doctors, the same factors impact an individual’s cooperation with the police.

Doctor-patient communication remains at the forefront of medical education. In classes, internships, and residencies, medical students learn how to interact better with patients, which enhances care.⁵ Police recruits need to learn the same type of skills in the academy. Then, after this initial training, officers can apply their techniques on the job and, thus, build trust and cooperation with the community.

CONCLUSION

Police academies need an effective structure for teaching essential interpersonal skills. To guide them in this endeavor, counselor education programs provide various methods for teaching and

evaluating these skills, which academies can tailor for their current curriculum. Then, when recruits leave the academy, they will have the interpersonal capabilities to enhance their legal and tactical skills. Entering the work force with this solid foundation enables officers to remove some of the barriers between the police and the public.

Officers need interpersonal training that their instructors easily can witness and evaluate. With this preparation, police recruits enter the force feeling competent and confident. This ensures that they will communicate civilly and respectfully with others, which ultimately leads to better public partnerships and safer communities. ♦

Endnotes

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⁵ Jerome E. Groopman, *How Doctors Think* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007); and Frederick W. Platt, “What Drives Doctors Crazy?” *Families, Systems, & Health* 26 (2008): 68.

Mr. McDermott welcomes readers’ questions and comments at pete06422@yahoo.com.

Mr. McDermott is a retired captain from the West Hartford and Windsor, Connecticut, Police Departments and a retired instructor from the Connecticut Police Academy.

Dr. Hulse is a professor and chair of the Counselor Education Department at Fairfield University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted in 2010

According to information released by the FBI, 56 law enforcement officers were feloniously killed in the line of duty last year, 72 died in accidents while performing their duties and 53,469 were assaulted in the line of duty. The 2010 edition of *Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted* provides comprehensive tabular data about these incidents and brief narratives describing the fatal attacks. The complete report is available exclusively on the FBI's Web site at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr>.

Felonious Deaths

The 56 felonious deaths occurred in 22 states and in Puerto Rico. The number of officers feloniously killed in 2010 increased by 8 compared with the 2009 figure (48 officers). The 5- and 10-year comparisons show an increase of 8 felonious deaths compared with the 2006 figure (48 officers) and a decrease of 14 deaths compared with data from 2001 (70 officers).

Among the officers feloniously killed, the average age was 38 years. The victim officers had served in law enforcement for an average of 10 years at the time of the fatal incidents. Fifty-four of the victim officers were male, and 2 were female. Forty-eight of the officers were white, 7 were black, and 1 was Asian/Pacific Islander.

Of the 56 officers feloniously killed, 15 were ambushed; 14 were involved in arrest situations; 8 were investigating suspicious persons/circumstances; 7 were performing traffic stops/pursuits; 6 were answering disturbance calls; 3 were involved in tactical situations (e.g., high-risk entry); 2 were conducting investigative activities, such as surveillances, searches, or interviews; and 1 officer was

killed while transporting or maintaining custody of prisoners.

Offenders used firearms to kill 55 of the 56 victim officers. Of these 55 officers, 38 were slain with handguns, 15 with rifles, and 2 with shotguns. One officer was killed with a vehicle used as a weapon.

Twenty-two of the felonious deaths occurred in the South, 18 in the West, 10 in the Midwest, and 3 in the Northeast. Three of the deaths took place in Puerto Rico.

Law enforcement agencies identified 69 alleged assailants in connection with the 56 felonious line-of-duty deaths. Fifty-seven of the assailants had prior criminal arrests, and 19 of the offenders were under judicial supervision at the time of the felonious incidents.

Assaults

In 2010, 53,469 law enforcement officers were assaulted while performing their duties. Of the officers assaulted, 26.1 percent suffered injuries. The largest percentage of victim officers (33 percent) were assaulted while responding to disturbance calls (e.g., family quarrels, bar fights). Assailants used personal weapons (e.g., hands, fists, feet) in 81.8 percent of the incidents, firearms in 3.4 percent, and knives or other cutting instruments in 1.7 percent of the incidents. Other types of dangerous weapons were used in 13.1 percent of assaults.

Accidental Deaths

Of the 72 law enforcement officers killed in accidents while performing their duties in 2010, the majority of them (45) were killed in automobile accidents. The number of accidental line-of-duty deaths was up 24 from the 2009 total (48 officers).

Notable Speech

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The Meaning and Honor of Service

By John J. Smietana, Jr.

It is both an honor and a privilege to be here today. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity. The Border Patrol Museum is a proper memorial, if you will, for all those who have sacrificed. Their names are listed inside, and it stands here every day as a reminder to all of us of what they did. You know, when I first heard that I was invited to speak, I was a little nervous. I was nervous because I didn't think that I would be able to pick the appropriate words with the appropriate dignity to honor those who have fallen. I asked myself, "What do I do?" I realized that as long as it comes from my heart, as long as the words convey the meaning, then those who have given their lives will appreciate them, and I hope that you do too.

We are here today to honor fallen Border Patrol agents and to honor everyone who has given their life in the service of this country. For us, that means

Clarence M. Childress and Robert W. Rosas, Jr. All the watchmen, patrol inspectors, agents, and aircraft pilots. We owe a great deal to them. For those of us in law enforcement, we made a commitment, and I want you to know that law enforcement is an honorable and noble profession.

Stop and think about that. You and all those who have gone before you have volunteered to follow a higher standard with higher degrees of integrity, honesty, and conduct. You have volunteered to protect this nation, its citizens, and those unable to protect themselves. You volunteer every day to run toward danger, to the sound of gunfire, when everyone else runs away from it. You volunteered to subject yourselves to the scrutiny and questions from just about everyone out there. They do not have the knowledge, experience, or understanding of what you do every day. They never have had to

make a split-second decision that may mean life or death. So, you are very, very special people. Very special people! As are all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

You know, every day when you go to work you risk injury or death. There are a lot of professions that have that same risk, but you go to work knowing that there are people out there who target you for the uniform that you wear and the ideals that you stand for. Not because of who you are, but because of what you represent. And, that is truly noble, and I thank you. All law enforcement officers, members of government, members of the service, and those who have fallen, on their very first day of employment have one thing in common—they took the oath of office. The oath of office is the cement, the mortar, that binds us to the foundations of our government, to the principals of the Constitution, our founding fathers, and all those who have gone before us and the legacy that they left.

When I have an intern class come in, one of the things that I ask them about is the oath. I was at an IACP conference, and there were over 200 law enforcement officers in the room, and they were asked about the oath. Where does the oath come from? Why do we take the oath? What does the oath mean? And, you know, not one person in the room raised a hand. They may have known the answer, but they did not raise their hand. Not one trainee or intern raised a hand either. Do we all know where the oath comes from? Why it binds us? Well, the oath comes from Article 6 of the U.S. Constitution, last paragraph. Basically, it states that we will be bound by oath to support the Constitution. When you stop and think about that, it is rather remarkable that it is found in the Constitution. That requirement comes before the Bill of Rights, the individual rights. It comes in the sections that state the authorities and limitations of the government. That is one of your jobs. That's one of the reasons you are so special. We are not above that law or those we serve. All who serve

must understand that. Their job is to protect this country and its Constitution.

Now, that Constitution did not say what the oath was, but, again going back to how important that oath was, the very first bill passed by the very first Congress and signed by the very first president, George Washington, in June of 1789, was the oath of office. It required that within 3 days of appointment that the government employee takes that oath. That is pretty powerful stuff, very important, and, just like each of you, our fallen heroes took that oath and sacrificed and gave their lives to support it. So, I ask each of you to think about that every day when you start your shift.

Another thing that I ask the trainees when they enter on duty is, "What is the meaning of the badge you wear? What does it mean to you?" More important, "What does it mean to everyone else?" It's a shining beacon, but what does it mean? The answers that I get are, "Sir, it means honesty." "Sir, it means sacrifice." "Sir, it means integrity." "Sir, it means duty." "Sir, it means authority!" All those answers are good, it means all those things, but that is not the answer I was looking for.

Chief Patrol Agent Smietana of the U.S. Border Patrol delivered this speech during the agency's annual memorial observance at the National Border Patrol Museum in El Paso, Texas, on May 21, 2010.



I went to the Border Patrol Academy to speak to the graduating class, and I asked them that same question. There were 50 brand new agents there, all sharp, polished, in shape, and ready to go. They gave me the same answers. I turned to the instructors and the other law enforcement officials in the audience, and I asked them the question. They didn't have the answer either. Finally, I saw a hand in the back row, a mom who was there watching her son graduate. She raised her hand. "Yes ma'am?" "Sir, it means trust!" She was absolutely right, it means trust! Trust that those who wear the badge will have honor and integrity, that they will do their duty, that they will have courage and be willing to make that sacrifice. Trust that you are going to do the right thing when there is nobody else around. Trust that you're going to do the right thing when it is something very tough, even when all your partners are against it. Trust that you will live up to the

oath that you took on that very first day. Trust that you will not tarnish this badge and all those heroes who have spilled their blood to polish it. Trust!

So, I ask all of you in law enforcement, every day when you get ready for your shift, whether on days, evenings, or nights, when you look in the mirror and pin on that badge or put it in your pocket, stop and think, "Am I going to earn the trust today? Will I live up to the legacy of those who have gone before me, who have laid down their lives to polish this badge?" When you can look in the mirror and say yes, then you are ready to start your shift. With that, I would like to close by saying thank you to all of you who are here, for the jobs that you do. Men and women of law enforcement, men and women in the military, thank you for what you do, for protecting this country and for protecting my family. I appreciate that! Honor first! And, God bless the United States of America! ♦

Wanted: Bulletin Honors



The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* seeks submissions from agencies that wish to have their memorials featured in the magazine's Bulletin Honors department. Needed materials include a short description, a photograph, and an endorsement from the agency's ranking officer. Submissions can be mailed to Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135, or e-mailed to leb@fbiacademy.edu.

Discovering Inspiration

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.

— John Quincy Adams

Inspiration comes in many forms and faces. You may find yourself inspired by a story you read. You may glean inspiration from something you witnessed. You, simply, may find it in the work you do every day. But, when is inspiration enough to motivate someone? How long does that last? Is it merely short-lived? What are the effects of inspiration from our former bosses and leaders?

Recently, I began to examine—actually, list—every direct supervisor I have had in my work life and whether each individual inspired me or not. I discovered 31 bosses over the years, starting with my first paid job at age 14 and taking me to the present day in the FBI.

While in the midst of this research, I had the honor of attending one of my former boss' full-military-honors burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Retired Brigadier General Corey Jefferson Wright passed away on August 10, 2011, at age 82. He was a husband, father of two, grandfather to three, and inspiration to many, including me. General Wright retired from a 30-year, active-duty career with the U.S. Army in 1980 and later headed the Army Programs Office (APO) at his alma mater, Syracuse University. While completing my MBA at Syracuse, I was General Wright's last graduate assistant. He ran the APO until his retirement in 1996. "The General," as many of us referred to him, inspired me and had a significant effect on my personal life and career—especially my decision to embark on a journey in public service.

As I stood on that hillside above his final resting place at Arlington Cemetery, I could not help but feel what a fitting tribute that ceremony was for his life, career, and

the indelible impressions he left with others. General Wright not only received the time-honored tradition of the 21-gun salute but 11 cannon shots, each echoing off of the Pentagon nearby. No less than 80 young and impressive soldiers of the U.S. Army Honor Guard accompanied his procession, complete with a caisson and the U.S. Army Band. From a distance, I watched his oldest grandson, about 10 years old, receive the American flag that had draped his grandfather's casket. I listened as family members recalled stories from summers at General Wright's camp in the Adirondacks, how he was the first one up each morning, ventured out in his canoe on the lake, and brought back fresh lily pads for his family's table setting.

These reflections and stories reminded me of my own interactions with The General, those evening chats we had at Syracuse about school, life, family, service, and sports. He remains an inspiration for me. I know I am not alone in these thoughts. I have heard from many former participants in his programs and been reminded of what an exceptional public servant, family figure, and, most important, inspirational human being General Wright really was.

So, ask yourself, from whom do you draw inspiration? How much does that person's leadership motivate you? Who is your General Wright, and, probably most important, are you someone's General Wright? ♦

Special Agent Gregory M. Milonovich, an instructor in Faculty Affairs and Development at the FBI Academy, prepared this Leadership Spotlight.



Emergency Vehicle Safety

By THOMAS J. CONNELLY

Whether in a large metropolitan area or in a quiet rural setting, police officers performing patrol functions do not simply use their patrol cars to transport them from call to call, chase down a traffic violator, or patrol their assigned areas; they also use their vehicle as their personal office. Like typical offices, the police vehicle is equipped with pens, paper, note pads, a computer, a radio, a telephone, and the forms necessary to complete reports and other paperwork. As in any other office setting, police officers use their vehicle to conduct meetings and interviews. Sometimes, officers even drink their coffee and eat their lunch in the car, just like most of us who work in

a traditional office. Thus, patrol cars not only serve numerous functions but present many distractions.

In my years in law enforcement, I found that 25 to 30 percent of police officer line-of-duty deaths resulted from motor vehicle traffic collisions.¹ Officers sustain many more nonfatal injuries each year as a result of traffic collisions involving patrol cars. Also, many line-of-duty deaths result from violent acts that occur in or within close proximity to the officer's vehicle.

When officers drive at high speeds through a densely populated area, they may not only endanger themselves but also, perhaps, the public. This situation is exacerbated by officers'

inherent stress and distractions when responding to a high-risk, life and death situation. The public expects police officers to assume these risks at all times, under all conditions, without exposing those around them to an unreasonable level of elevated danger. Police executives and administrators expect the same.

IN-CAR TECHNOLOGY

Consider the equipment installed in a police vehicle to make an officer's job safer and easier, including technology, such as computers, video cameras, license plate readers, two-way radios (sometimes more than one), stolen-vehicle locator devices, and manually operated light and siren controllers. Can



these pieces of equipment create a distraction to the officer when operating their car? In my experience, they do.

When I was driving a patrol car, I found myself trying to multitask and operate a computer that could access various law enforcement databases and send messages to other cars or the dispatcher. I cannot say the number of times that I looked up from the keyboard just in time to avoid sideswiping a parked car or rear-ending a stopped one! Fortunately for me, I never was involved in a collision due to my attention being diverted while typing in a license plate number or messaging another officer. I was lucky, but others

have not been as fortunate. Most agencies' policies and procedures prohibit operation of the computer while driving. It is a practice that officers on the road should avoid.

I also was involved in a number of high-speed pursuits during my career. Although most police officers are excellent multitaskers, it is difficult to drive a patrol car at high speeds during a pursuit while operating the lights and siren and talking on the radio to fellow officers and the dispatcher. Add inclement weather or maneuvering through a school zone with children present, and it is easy to see the intense physical stress officers face. High-speed pursuits probably are the most dangerous situations threatening the safety

of officers as well as the public. Though officers reasonably must pursue violent offenders to keep their communities safe, the public expects them to keep citizens' safety interests in mind while engaged in high-speed pursuits.

As technology has developed, especially in the mobile policing environment, it increasingly has become integrated into the police vehicle. Thirty years ago, the typical police car was equipped with a two-way radio and a controller (possibly a set of toggle switches) for the lights and siren, usually mounted below the dashboard, somewhat out of the way. In contrast, many police cars today have several two-way radio systems, a light and siren controller, a computer, a video system with cameras

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Significant injury avoidance in vehicle ergonomics is becoming a real consideration for police executives and risk managers.

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Mr. Connelly, a retired captain from the Los Altos, California, Police Department, is president of a management and public safety consulting firm in Santa Clara.

mounted on the ceiling of the car and a separate monitor to review videos, license plate readers, moving radar transmitters, stolen-vehicle locator systems, and other mission-critical systems.

ERGONOMICS

With all of this technology in police cars, it is a wonder that officers wearing 12-pound utility belts, a sidearm, and body armor will fit inside! Also, consider that the new 2012 police vehicle models from major manufacturers will be somewhat smaller inside than the vehicles prominently in use today. Significant injury avoidance in vehicle ergonomics is becoming a real consideration for police executives and risk managers.

Ergonomics represents a risk management concern in most industries today. Many employers, including law enforcement agencies, are required to develop and adopt a comprehensive injury and illness prevention plan (IIPP) in their work environments. Workplace ergonomics plays a significant part in any IIPP. The cost to businesses of repetitive stress injuries (e.g., back injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome, persistent migraines) due to poor ergonomics is significant. Police executives and risk managers need to consider not only the direct costs of medical care related to ergonomic injuries but also the indirect costs associated with reduced productivity, increased

absenteeism, and damaged employer-employee relationships when evaluating the impact of ergonomic injuries.

Organizational leaders and risk managers proactively identify potential hazards and conditions that could lead to unnecessary injuries in the workplace and strive to enhance workplace safety. Do the guidelines and standards set forth in an organization's IIPP carry over to officers' patrol cars? If they do not,

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***Integration of
new and innovative
technologies...is
imperative for officers
behind the wheel.***

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should they? A concerted effort to make the inside of the patrol car as ergonomic as possible will reduce the impact of repetitive stress injuries and avoidable driver distractions related to routine police vehicle operations.

DISTRACTIONS BEHIND THE WHEEL

Distracted driving is another factor to consider in reducing the injuries and fatalities associated with police vehicle operations. Police officers perform myriad

tasks behind the wheel. Concurrently, they must safely operate their vehicles at all times in the communities they serve. And, the more activity going on in the police car, the more likely the police officer driving the vehicle will be distracted. Officers are trained to handle distractions and should be assessed periodically on how well they do so.

SAFETY STEPS

Multiple approaches exist that can enhance the safety of emergency vehicle operations and reduce the number of preventable injuries and deaths that result from those operations. These approaches include evaluating alternative vehicle technology systems for safety, periodically reviewing emergency vehicle operations training programs, critically reviewing of policies and procedures related to emergency vehicle operations continually, implementing tracking systems for on-duty collisions (especially avoidable ones), integrating innovative vehicle safety technologies, and considering the potential negative safety impacts created before new technologies are integrated into existing emergency vehicle systems.

Updated Technology

Several actions can help address some of the concerns related to the technological systems currently integrated into the standard patrol car. Most of that

technology is stand-alone. With multiple radio control heads, monitors, keyboards, cameras, and radar control units inside the passenger compartment, it seems that the integration of these systems in police vehicles, perhaps, requires further consideration, especially from a safety and ergonomics perspective. Many patrol cars today appear cramped and cluttered. As a result, law enforcement agencies and technology-product vendors in the public sector must develop ways to integrate the various systems in police cars to eliminate any disordered appearance. In addition, development of an intuitive, user-friendly operating system for the integrated technology is paramount. I have seen several systems currently marketed to law enforcement agencies that attempt to integrate the various technological and operational controls, reportedly enhancing the safety of patrol cars as a result.

I have seen only one integration system that eliminates the clutter of control heads and redundant monitors in the vehicle and incorporates a selection of control methods. This system integrates the radios, light and siren controllers, moving radar control heads, video control heads, and other external technologies into the mobile computer, which offers control via several easy-to-use methods.



The first method incorporates a hand-controlled device mounted on the floorboard between the seats. Drivers can operate the lights, siren, and radios with one hand without having to divert their attention away from the roadway. The second method involves voice commands. Most of the system's functions can be controlled by simple voice commands, including queries of license plates and people, thereby eliminating the need to type on the keyboard while driving. The final method employs a touch-screen user interface. By using a system, such as this, the radios, light and siren controllers, video controllers, and other clutter-causing equipment are removed from the passenger compartment of the police car and mounted remotely, typically in the trunk. This allows vehicles to appear roomy, neat, well-designed, and airbag compliant.

Vehicle Operations Training

In addition to systems upgrades, police administrators should review their basic emergency vehicle operations training programs. In this regard, a number of critical issues require consideration: how frequently training is held, number of hours committed, if that time commitment is adequate, whether the training mirrors realistic situations, and if reviews of current policies and procedures are included as an integral part of the training.

Modifying or expanding vehicle operations is a sensitive issue, especially considering the financial constraints that local law enforcement agencies face today. However, there may be creative ways to enhance this training without a significant budget impact. Roll-call training, shared regional instruction, and video

training serve as examples of less expensive, yet viable methods. Agencies need to be creative in this area. Police executives and training coordinators could refer to various industry-specific resources to help them develop innovative training programs. Some of these resources include the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association (ILEETA), various private universities and research organizations, and local or regional training academies.

Policy Development and Enforcement

Another necessary step involves ongoing critical review of department policies and procedures specifically related to emergency vehicle operations and pursuit driving. Ensuring compliance with contemporary laws and legal mandates related to emergency vehicle operations is crucial. Addressing activities that can lead to distracted driving (e.g., typing license plate numbers or messages into the computer) also is an important consideration. Ensuring compliance with these policies through consistent disciplinary intervention is imperative, not only when accidents occur but whenever a violation of policy is detected. In doing so, the policy is given credence throughout the organization.

A number of resources are available to assist police executives with policy review and development. The International Association of Chiefs of Police is a useful resource providing access to sample policies and topic-specific research. PERF and other state and regional police chiefs' organizations are great resources as well. Private companies also provide policy development services to police

Ensuring compliance with contemporary laws and legal mandates related to emergency vehicle operations is crucial.

agencies for a subscription fee, though some risk management groups will pay subscription fees for law enforcement organizations.

Tracking and administratively reviewing all on-duty traffic collisions is another useful approach related to policy development and enforcement. If an employee is involved in a number of avoidable collisions at a rate higher than the norm, the officer's driving record merits further investigation.

Determining the root causes of collisions and developing plans to address those, whether individually or organizationally, is important. Sometimes, additional training specifically developed for the officer, in addition to any other required in-service training, is appropriate. Other times, formal discipline resulting from identified policy violations might be necessary. Occasionally, the officer may not have the skills required to operate a patrol vehicle and its mobile technology safely, which could necessitate elevated levels of disciplinary intervention. The systematic review of emergency vehicle collision reports and employees' driving records also may help identify the need for a change of organizational policy or training.

The impact of adapting to new technology in police cars is another important consideration for police executives and managers. Technology continues to evolve, and, as it does, new products will be incorporated into the mobile policing environment. When these technologies are adopted, the impact that their presence and operation will have on the driver must be considered. Then, through the steps described previously, any potential increased risk factors can be adequately addressed and mitigated before the technology is implemented.

New Safety Systems

A greater number of cars today have higher-level safety systems built into them at the factory. These systems further can enhance safety in the mobile policing environment. Some new vehicles are equipped with proximity-warning devices that sound an alarm when objects get too close to them. Others have automatic lane-drift warning systems and automatic braking in case the vehicle is approaching another car or an object and is not slowing down or braking. Some even have precollision impact systems that activate built-in safety systems before a collision occurs, while others can parallel park on their own. Police administrators and fleet managers

can work with vehicle manufacturers to ensure that they integrate as many safety features into police fleet vehicles as they can.

CONCLUSION

Since the introduction of new and multiple technologies into police vehicles over the past few decades, the resulting clutter, driver distractions, and ergonomic degradation of the passenger compartment has created a situation wherein safe vehicle operation may have been sacrificed.

To halt this trend, a multifaceted approach is required. Integration of new and innovative technologies, from space-saving computer systems to emerging

vehicle safety features, is imperative for officers behind the wheel. At the same time, the development of contemporary policies and procedures related to emergency vehicle operations, with consistent enforcement and requisite training, are important for officers when not on the road. These all are options that police department executives and administrators must heed to enhance officer safety and minimize the number of police injuries and deaths attributable to on-duty traffic collisions. ♦

Endnotes

¹ The author derived this percentage from his professional experience and expertise.

Wanted: Notable Speeches

The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* seeks for its Notable Speech department transcripts of presentations made by criminal justice professionals. Anyone who has delivered a speech recently and would like to share the information with a wider audience may submit a transcript of the presentation to the *Bulletin* for consideration.

As with article submissions, the *Bulletin* staff will edit the speech for length and clarity, but, realizing that the information was presented orally, maintain as much of the original flavor as possible. Presenters should submit their transcripts typed and double-spaced on 8 1/2- by 11-inch white paper with all pages numbered, along with an electronic version of the transcript, or e-mail them. Send the material to: Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135, or to leb@fbiacademy.edu.

FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

Author Guidelines

GENERAL INFORMATION

The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* is an official publication of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Frequency of Publication: Monthly

Purpose: To provide a forum for the exchange of information on law enforcement-related topics

Audience: Criminal justice professionals, primarily law enforcement managers

MANUSCRIPT SPECIFICATIONS

Length: Feature articles should contain 2,000 to 3,500 words (8 to 14 pages, double-spaced). Submissions for specialized departments, such as Police Practice and Case Study, should contain 1,200 to 2,000 words (5 to 8 pages, double-spaced).

Format: Authors can e-mail articles. To send by mail, authors should submit three copies of their articles typed and double-spaced on 8 1/2- by 11-inch white paper with all pages numbered. An electronic version of the article should accompany the typed manuscript.

Authors should supply references when quoting a source exactly, citing or paraphrasing another person's work or ideas, or referring to information that generally is not well known. For proper footnote format, authors should refer to *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed., by Kate L. Turabian.

Writing Style and Grammar: The *Bulletin* prefers to publish articles in the third person (Point of View and Perspective submissions are exceptions) using active voice. Authors should follow *The New York Public Library Writer's Guide to Style and Usage* and should study several issues of the magazine to ensure that their writing style meets the *Bulletin's* requirements.

Authors also should view the expanded author guidelines, which contain additional specifications, detailed examples, and effective writing

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND GRAPHICS

A photograph of the author(s) should accompany the manuscript. Authors also can submit photos and illustrations that visually enhance and support the text. High-quality digital images or color glossy prints (3- by 5-inch to 5- by 7-inch) reproduce best. The *Bulletin* does not accept responsibility for lost or damaged photos or illustrations.

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SUBMISSION

Authors can e-mail their submissions to leb@fbiacademy.edu or mail them to Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135.

Bulletin Notes

Law enforcement officers are challenged daily in the performance of their duties; they face each challenge freely and unselfishly while answering the call to duty. In certain instances, their actions warrant special attention from their respective departments. The *Bulletin* also wants to recognize those situations that transcend the normal rigors of the law enforcement profession.



Captain Burchfield

Captain Jeff Burchfield of the Blount County, Tennessee, Sheriff's Office responded to an emergency call regarding two fishermen in distress. The fishermen's boat veered too close to a dam on a local river and was taking on water due to the choppy conditions. Captain Burchfield crawled across a narrow pipe to get to a concrete platform next to the dam. From there, he threw a rope to the two fishermen and pulled them away from the dam's hydraulics one at a time to calmer waters, where they were picked up by a rescue boat. During the rescue, the fishermen's boat overturned—they were minutes away from drowning.



Officer McCaslin



Sergeant Chretien

Officer Matt McCaslin of the Powell, Wyoming, Police Department responded to a fire at a local motel. Assisted by the motel's night clerk, he took prompt and alert action in evacuating guests, helping one guest down from a second-story window and pounding on ground-floor windows to alert guests to evacuate. He entered the motel after hearing voices from inside, calling out to them but receiving no response. Crawling through thick smoke with only 2 to 3 feet of visibility, he found an unconscious man in the hallway and attempted to help him to safety. Unable to move

the man on his own, Officer McCaslin left the building and summoned Sergeant Mike Chretien, who helped recover the victim. After searching for victims in the motel one last time, Officer McCaslin took command of the scene, organizing response efforts by initiating call out of extra personnel, directing people to move vehicles away from the burning building, and advising evacuated guests to remain until accounted for.

Nominations for the *Bulletin Notes* should be based on either the rescue of one or more citizens or arrest(s) made at unusual risk to an officer's safety. Submissions should include a short write-up (maximum of 250 words), a separate photograph of each nominee, and a letter from the department's ranking officer endorsing the nomination. Submissions can be mailed to the Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA 22135 or e-mailed to leb@fbiacademy.edu.

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Patch Call



The New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Police Service is built upon the philosophy of community-based policing. The department's patch proudly indicates that its officers are "working hand in hand with our community." A set of hands support the town and its river port and complete the maple leaf, a symbol of Canada.



The background of the University of Nevada, Reno, Police Service's patch represents Truckee Meadows, a high desert valley at the foot of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The state seal, in the center, depicts a partial sunrise behind a mountain range and includes symbols representing the state's natural resources and heritage of mining and agriculture. The bottom of the patch features the year of the university's founding.